

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A biocompatible fastener, said biocompatible fastener ~~having comprising a first portion and a second portion pair of members matingly engageable with one another, at least one of said first portion being made out of members comprising an outer coating coated over an inner core, said outer coating comprising a first bioabsorbable material, said inner core comprising one of a second bioabsorbable material and a non-bioabsorbable material, said first bioabsorbable material having a first degradation rate, said second portion being made out of a material selected from the group consisting of a non-bioabsorbable material and a second bioabsorbable material; said second bioabsorbable material having a second degradation rate, said second degradation rate being slower than said first degradation rate, wherein, after said pair of members have been matingly engaged with one another, degradation of said outer coating over said inner core causes said pair of members to disengage from one another.~~

2. (Currently amended) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 1 wherein said ~~second portion is made out of~~ inner core comprises said non-bioabsorbable material.

3. (Currently amended) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 1 wherein said ~~first portion is coated over a portion of said second portion~~ inner core comprises said second bioabsorbable material.

4. (Currently amended) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 1 wherein ~~said first portion is positioned within said biocompatible fastener so that degradation of said first portion~~

~~results in fragmentation of the biocompatible fastener~~ only one of said members comprises said outer coating coated over said inner core.

5. (Currently amended) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 1 wherein ~~said biocompatible fastener comprises~~ one of said pair of members is a male member and the other of said pair of members is a female member, said male member comprising ~~a post having~~ a head ~~disposed at a first end thereof~~, said female member ~~defining~~ comprising a bore adapted to receive said head and ~~having~~ comprising a flange extending into said bore, said head being engageable with said flange once said head has been inserted therepast so as to inhibit withdrawal of said head.

6. (Currently amended) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 5 wherein said head comprises ~~an~~ said outer coating ~~and an coated over said~~ inner core, ~~wherein said first portion is said outer coating and said second portion comprises said inner core~~, and wherein degradation of said outer coating ~~facilitates~~ permits withdrawal of said head past said flange.

7. (Currently amended) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 5 wherein said flange comprises ~~an~~ said outer coating ~~and an coated over said~~ inner core, ~~wherein said first portion is said outer coating and said second portion comprises said inner core~~, and wherein degradation of said outer coating ~~facilitates~~ permits withdrawal of said head past said flange.

Claim 8 (Canceled).

9. (Currently amended) A biocompatible fastener comprising:

(a) a sleeve, said sleeve defining a bore;

(b) a substantially circumferential flange formed on said sleeve and extending into said bore;

(c) a male member, said male member comprising a post and a head disposed at a first end of said post, said head being insertable into said bore and past said flange, said head being engageable with said flange once inserted therepast so as to inhibit withdrawal of said head from said bore;

(d) wherein at least one of said flange and said head comprises an outer coating material and an inner core material, said outer coating material being a first bioabsorbable material having a first degradation rate, said inner core material being a material selected from the group consisting of a non-bioabsorbable material and a second bioabsorbable material, said second bioabsorbable material having a second degradation rate, said second degradation rate being slower than said first degradation rate; and

(e) wherein degradation of said outer coating material facilitates withdrawal of said head past said flange.

10. (Original) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 9 further comprising a first base and a second base, said sleeve being mounted on said first base, said male member being mounted on said second base.

11. (Original) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 10 wherein said sleeve is provided with a longitudinal slot.

12. (Original) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 10 wherein said sleeve is provided with a pair of longitudinal slots.

13. (Original) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 10 wherein said sleeve terminates at one end in a sharp tip.

14. (Currently amended) A biocompatible fastener comprising:

- (a) a male portion, said male portion comprising
  - (i) a first base member, said first base member having a bottom surface, and
  - (ii) a first male member mounted on said bottom surface of said first base member, said first male member comprising a post extending downwardly from said bottom surface, said post having a bottom end, and a head disposed at said bottom end of said post; and
- (b) a female portion, said female portion comprising
  - (i) a second base member, said second base member having a top surface, and
  - (ii) a first sleeve mounted on said top surface of said second base member and extending upwardly therefrom, said first sleeve defining a bore adapted to receive said head and having a at least one flange formed thereon, said at least one flange extending into said bore, said at least one flange being engageable with said head once said head has been inserted therepast so as to inhibit withdrawal of said head from said bore;
- (c) wherein at least one of said at least one flange and said head ~~is at least partially made of a first~~ comprises an outer coating coated over an inner core, said outer coating comprising a first bioabsorbable material, said inner core comprising one of a non-bioabsorbable material and a second bioabsorbable material, said first bioabsorbable material having a first degradation rate ~~and wherein at least one of said first base member and said second base member comprises a material selected from the group consisting of a non-bioabsorbable material and a second bioabsorbable material,~~ said second bioabsorbable material having a second degradation rate, said second degradation rate being slower than said first degradation rate; and
- (d) wherein degradation of said first bioabsorbable material facilitates withdrawal of said head past said at least one flange.

15. (Original) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 14 wherein said head is generally conical in shape and terminates in a relatively sharp tip.

16. (Original) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 14 wherein said first base member is generally flat and oval.

17. (Original) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 14 wherein said second base member is generally flat and oval.

18. (Original) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 14 wherein said first sleeve is provided with at least one longitudinal slot.

19. (Original) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 14 wherein said first sleeve is provided with a pair of longitudinal slots.

20. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A biocompatible fastener ~~as claimed in claim 14~~ comprising:

(a) a male portion, said male portion comprising

(i) a first base member, said first base member having a bottom surface, and

(ii) a first male member mounted on said bottom surface of said first base member, said first male member comprising a post extending downwardly from said bottom surface, said post having a bottom end, and a head disposed at said bottom end of said post; and

(b) a female portion, said female portion comprising

(i) a second base member, said second base member having a top surface, and

(ii) a first sleeve mounted on said top surface of said second base member and extending upwardly therefrom, said first sleeve defining a bore adapted to receive said head and having a flange formed thereon, said flange extending into said bore, said flange being engageable

with said head once said head has been inserted therepast so as to inhibit withdrawal of said head from said bore;

(c) wherein at least one of said flange and said head is at least partially made of a first bioabsorbable material having a first degradation rate and wherein at least one of said first base member and said second base member comprises a material selected from the group consisting of a non-bioabsorbable material and a second bioabsorbable material, said second bioabsorbable material having a second degradation rate, said second degradation rate being slower than said first degradation rate;

(d) wherein degradation of said first bioabsorbable material facilitates withdrawal of said head past said flange and

(e) wherein said first sleeve has a top end and wherein said top end is shaped to terminate in a relatively sharp tip.

21. (Original) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 14 wherein said male portion further comprises a second male member mounted on said first base member and extending downwardly therefrom, said second male member being identical to said first male member, and wherein said female portion further comprises a second sleeve mounted on said second base member and extending upwardly therefrom, said second sleeve being aligned with said second male member and being a mirror image of said first sleeve.

22. (New) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 5 wherein said head is generally conical.

23. (New) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 5 wherein said female member comprises at least two flanges extending into said bore.

24. (New) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 23 wherein said female member comprises at least three flanges extending into said bore.

25. (New) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 24 wherein said female member comprises at least four flanges extending into said bore.

26. (New) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 25 wherein said female member comprises five flanges extending into said bore.

27. (New) The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 5 wherein said female member comprises a flat base shaped to include said bore and said flange.